

The New Architecture for Food Security Symposium on Global Agricultural and Food Security

Washington, DC

May 20, 2010

Marshall, thank you for that welcome.

And I am so thankful that Representatives Rosa DeLauro and James McGovern are here too. Their leadership in the House is crucial to comprehensively tackling this problem.

I would be remiss not to mention the work of Senators Casey, Lugar, and Kerry, and Representative McCollum on the Global Food Security Act, which was just reintroduced yesterday.

Last year the number of people suffering from chronic hunger topped one billion for the first time.

The food crisis, followed by the financial crisis, clearly exacerbated the hunger problem.

But let's be honest: So did years of drift among donors and governments, including our own.

The Chicago Council report asks the US to lead a second Green Revolution.

We agree.

The first Green Revolution succeeded in lifting incomes and lessening hunger in large parts of

the world. In 1979, agricultural programs made up 18 percent of all assistance. At that time, developing world productivity gains were 3 percent per year.

Since the height of the Green Revolution, worldwide investment in agricultural development plummeted. By 2008, agriculture investment accounted for just 3.5 percent of aid. And productivity growth fell to below one percent— lower than the rate of population growth.

The human effects are clear – increased hunger, chronically undernourished children who are unable to learn and who suffer from a lifetime of lost opportunity.

But the effects also threaten global stability – we've seen example after example of food riots, instability and conflict as communities fight over scarce productive resources.

Agricultural development is a springboard for broader economic development. And food security is the foundation for peace and opportunity – and therefore a foundation for our own national security.

The Obama Administration's plans for a more peaceful world are centered on enhancing prosperity among our partner countries by elevating development and better integrating it with the other pillars of our foreign policy.

That is why President Obama pledged in his inaugural address that we would work alongside the people of poor nations to make their farms flourish.

That is why Secretary Clinton, together with Secretary General Ban ki-Moon, drew together leaders from more than 130 countries for a special meeting to ask them to commit themselves to this cause during the UN General Assembly.

And that is why we are all here today.

Through the Feed the Future Initiative, we are investing the talents of experts throughout our government, working closely with the State Department, the MCC, the USTR, and the Peace Corps.

Secretary Vilsack will be here later to tell you about our new partnerships with USDA. His leadership of food security at home and abroad, and USDA's commitment is critical to this effort.

Through Feed the Future, we will be investing at least \$3.5 billion over three years to reverse the trend of failed agriculture and malnutrition leading to hunger and insecurity.

Combined with the contributions of our partners, we expect to increase the incomes of 40 million people over ten years. And we expect to reach 25 million children with nutrition interventions that will prevent stunting in 10 million kids.

How?

This initiative seeks to create a modern aid mechanism whose architecture is based on the principles articulated by President Obama at L'Aquila and endorsed by 192 UN member states in Rome.

The most important aim enunciated in Italy was to invest in country-owned plans.

We know even the most expert donor work is limited in its ability to transform systems.

Country-led efforts are the ONLY way to amplify the impact of donor projects and reach real scale.

For years there has been talk about country-led planning. So even I originally asked: What's new here?

Well, we are beginning to see the early results.

In Rwanda, they recognized they needed a comprehensive approach to agriculture, so they assembled key stakeholders, developed a plan and completed a thorough technical review in December.

As of April 15th Rwanda's \$848 million plan is substantially funded, with a \$275 million assist from international donors. I don't think it's a mere coincidence that since 2006, when the planning process began, Rwanda experienced a real increase in agricultural sector GDP growth.

Liberia is off to a fast start—from a very tough starting point—under the strong leadership of President Sirleaf, who is coming later today.

By the end of 2010 we should have 15 African investment plans. Those plans represent countries with a total population of more than 600 million Africans and must serve as the basis for all donor engagement.

We see similar progress in other parts of the world. I look forward to visiting Bangladesh next week to meet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as she leads the final stages of their planning process and my colleague Cheryl Mills has worked closely with Haiti's top leaders as they have developed theirs.

These plans show the signs of strength we are looking for: clear investment priorities, strong commitment from the highest level of leadership, transformational goals, and the involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

For us, these plans are the basis for increased investment.

But we all know it's not just about how much we give. It's about how we focus our funding.

Which brings me to another principle the world community has agreed to:

Taking a comprehensive approach to food security across the whole value chain— from farm to table.

That comprehensive approach starts with a restructured research agenda.

To that end, we are working with other donors to support the CGIAR in its effort to reform. Its new mega-programs will focus on priority staple crops, reinvest in core breeding, and integrate systems research for production systems such as East African highland systems and South Asian cereal-based systems.

As Secretary Vilsack will discuss later, we are leveraging USDA's research capabilities – expanding our partnerships with the Agricultural Research Service and the new National Institute for Food and Agriculture in areas such as wheat stem rust, livestock diseases research and abiotic stresses such as drought and heat tolerance.

And we are asking our land grant university partners to push the frontiers of productivity through greater focus. Our 8 current CRISP programs cover 115 research activities and we seek to focus this work on a smaller set of core Feed the Future research priorities even as we increase our investment.

In countries, we will expand efforts to develop robust country regulatory systems so that farmers can choose which crop technologies to use based on their own informed assessments of their

needs.

But to really reach farmers with the fruits of these efforts, we are directing each of our country teams to prioritize investments in national agricultural research systems (where AGRA has been a real leader) and in modern extension systems, with a focus on hiring women extension workers.

But increasing agricultural productivity only gets us so far.

I just returned from Kenya, where a bumper maize crop and poor drying conditions have led to high levels of aflatoxin contamination that could wipe out the gains farmers expected for their hard work. In fact, an initial USAID survey of draft African agricultural plans shows that developing effective markets is their top priority.

We have considerable capabilities in this area, but too often our investments have resulted in a collection of projects that fail to transform a value chain and leave a lasting market oriented agricultural system. So we will do things differently.

First, we're getting feedback from the private sector on our investments and aligning investments in grain storage, market information systems and feeder roads with private sector priorities.

Second, we are refocusing efforts to increase agri-business investment in countries. We have a range of tools – including philanthropic or corporate partnerships, use of our development credit authority to expand access to bank lending, and grant mechanisms that essentially provide small and medium sized firms with equity finance. The DCA alone has unlocked more than \$2 billion in private sector lending could be used more aggressively in agriculture – so we are recruiting local banks and local agricultural businesses to participate.

Third, we are encouraging more creative partnerships with larger scale buyers of food to create the type of durable market demand that could be the basis for greater investment. Examples range from Wal-Mart's efforts to help Central American farmers improve post-harvest handling

to a similar effort that links cocoa buyers to small farmers through the West African sustainable tree crops program.

But, as we know the people who matter most aren't the financiers, the Ag ministers or the aid workers. They are the female farmers who are the undertapped solution to this problem.

Women produce from 60 to 80 percent of the food in the countries where we work. And when women control gains in income, they are more likely to spend those gains on family needs.

For years we've talked about the importance of women, but now – with leadership from Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Melanne Verveer – we are focusing on women in everything we do.

We start by focusing on those crops – sweet potato and legumes – that are women's crops. And we are working to ensure that women get equal access to support – such financial and extension services. To make this happen, we are expanding investments in women's producer networks and fellowships for women who pursue degrees in agriculture.

But we also are including nutrition interventions that target women and children with high intensity feeding, micronutrient supplementation and school feeding – through partnerships with our Global Health Initiative and McGovern Dole school feeding program.

At L'Aquila, we highlighted the need for multilateral organizations to be a part of this effort. The Rome agencies and Committee on Food Security have offered tremendous leadership and the multi-donor trust fund at the World Bank is now active.

Its steering committee will be composed of equal numbers of donor and recipient countries. And they recently committed to making all of their executive sessions open and transparent.

In total \$880 million has already been pledged to this fund from the US, Spain, Canada, South

Korea, and the Gates Foundation.

To ensure that all of the investments I've outlined are as high-impact as possible, we are working closely with key agencies within the USG and we are reforming the way we work.

We're developing our own multiyear investment strategies, so we can be better partners for the long term. And we are coordinating with other donors through both intensive diplomacy and operational partnerships in country.

And while in the past we've done retrospective program evaluation, going forward we will collect baseline data from the start with a focus on measuring women's incomes, child malnutrition, and agricultural production.

I've turned to Ambassador Bill Garvelink, to oversee the execution of the Food Security Initiative within USIAD as our Deputy Coordinator for Development. He is restructuring our more than 130 agricultural experts around the world and across agencies into a single food security program.

He'll be working with Ambassador Pat Haslach who will serve as our Deputy Coordinator for Diplomacy at the State Department.

So how can you help?

If you're a partner country: We will follow your lead. Once you commit to a comprehensive plan, we will commit to helping you execute it over the long term. We will have a single point of contact in country to coordinate US efforts and engage with your leaders.

If you're an NGO or a USAID implementing partner: Your expertise will be indispensable and thank you for reviewing plans and sharing your learnings. We ask that you align that expertise behind country priorities and have specific strategies for building local capacity in your

programs. And we want to work with you to maximize the amount of money that gets invested in countries versus redirected back to the Beltway.

If you're from the private sector: Tell us what countries and donors can do to reduce constraints on business operations and please explore with us whether our tools to encourage investment would help you make the commitment to invest.

To ensure that all stakeholders understand how they can get involved, we are starting an e-newsletter that will provide in-country contacts, and establishing a dedicated contact for private sector firms and NGOs.

But, by far, the most important thing that each of us can do is to hold each other's feet to the fire.

Like the American people, like the President and Secretary of State, and like the staff of all participating partners, and like you;

I am acutely aware that today lack of food will lead to the death of about 25,000 people.

We are gathered here today because we know that doesn't need to happen.

Thank you.

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For more information on Feed the Future Initiative visit: <http://www.feedthefuture.gov/>